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Governor

ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY

Rehabilitation Services Administration
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John L. Clayton
Director

Dear Parent,

This letter is being sent to parents of students who have been identified as having a disability. Its purpose is to introduce you to the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and Employment Support Services (ESS) Programs administered by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA).

We at the Rehabilitation Services Administration believe that all persons with disabilities should have an opportunity for gainful work and careers and we want to play a part in helping your child to achieve such goals. The enclosures provide you with things you should know.

If your son or daughter has a disability and is in Special Education, an Individualized Education Plans (IEP) will be developed throughout his/her high school years. The plans during the first few years are to help to identify job strengths and interests and to make sure that the classes selected help him/her prepare for the job or career that is right for him/her.

Within a year or two of his/her planned exit from school, you, your child, and child's teachers will begin identifying what services will be necessary after leaving school and what agencies might be available to help provide those services (see attached enclosures). Those other people will become a necessary part of the IEP planning team. They will help to plan what your child will do after school exit and they should tell you what services they can make available. Sometimes it is important and necessary that the resources of all of these agencies are used in unison to help your child achieve his/her goals.

The Vocational Rehabilitation program is a program for individuals with disabilities who require VR or ESS services to help then obtain or retain employment. This program may be important as you begin planning your child's transition from school.

For example:

School Agreements.

The Rehabilitation Services Administration has developed formal agreements with many schools throughout Arizona. These agreements allow the VR program to become involved in providing some work exploration or career development services for students while they are still in school. Ask about the school agreements between VR and your school, as we want to be sure your child participates in the program(s) provided.

Transition Planning.

Even if the school does not have a school agreement, the VR program will help your son/daughter plan what he/she will do after school exit. If he /she requires help to go to or to prepare for work because of his/her disability, the VR program is available to help. You should ask about possible referral to the VR program two years before your child exits school. This is especially important if your child plans to continue schooling after he/she completes high school and VR program assistance is required to help meet his/her special needs.

Invitation to meet the local VR representative before your child exits school.

Please ask for our involvement when you begin to plan and prepare for your child's exit from school if you feel that he/she needs services from the VR program because of disability. The VR program counselor assigned to your school can help you determine what the disability-related needs are and how your child may be able to benefit from VR services. We want to begin planning VR involvement with both you (and the IEP team) before your child exits school.

Involve your probation officer, mental health specialist, DD case manager.

The VR program works closely with the Behavioral Health System, the Division of Development Disabilities, the Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections, and with County Juvenile Probation programs. It is very important that you ask for the involvement of these programs at this stage of IEP planning as well, when appropriate. Success through the VR program is often possible only with the active involvement and commitment of these other agencies.

Our goal is to help your child make a smooth transition to meaningful, gainful, and sustained employment. Enclosed are brochures that provide you with more information about the VR and ESS programs administered by the Rehabilitation Services Administration and programs administered by other agencies.

Sincerely,

Local RSA Office Supervisor
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